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I ended my initial remarks by discussing the collaborative, and I want to close this special section with the thought that the research project we have been outlining here has much in common with that particular portion of it. Having shared that wider experience, I suspect that most members of the larger team now wonder why more research does not have this character.

If one looks at the formal properties of academic life, its organization, and its patterning, one might think that the university department is made for this kind of work. Corridors teeming with trained sociologists gathered into administrative units with the authority to form their own ranks and actively engaged in training others to be like themselves. What could be better suited to collaboration than that? Part of the problem, obviously, is that responsible departments have to include a wide range of subfields and methodological approaches and schools of thought when they recruit faculties, and another may be the expectation in our craft that research is conducted by single investigators or by collaborations of two or three, rarely more. That has a good deal to do with old habits and customs in our part of the academic world.

But that kind of collaboration has happened before in the sociological ranks, and it may be very useful for us to remember them and then to consider what lessons they have for us now. The first was at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s, when a considerable portion of the sociology faculty and most members of the graduate student body took to the local streets to take the measure of that remarkable new social phenomenon emerging all around them, the modern city. And the second was at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the 1930s where, again, faculty and graduate students fanned out into the neighboring hills and plains and hollows of the rural south, notebooks in hand, to begin a new field of study. These were both collaborations of a special sort in that the reports brought back from the field were meant to be contributions to a larger whole and were undertaken with that in mind.

We need not go into that now, but it would be a worthy topic for another time.

**ENDNOTE**

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